

Dear Friends of the Ghana Mission,

In Pastor Ben's article last month, (August 2025) we were blessed to hear first-hand from the current ministry partners, and Pastors, in our Ghana Mission. They all shared what the Ghana Mission means to them, and we are grateful for their leadership and heartfelt contributions.

The Ghana Mission has grown and changed tremendously over the last 30 years, under the guiding hand of Pastor Ben Wilson in Ghana, and the divine blessings of Jesus Christ our Lord. Many years ago, it was Pastor Jimmy Madsen, Pastor Woody Chamberlain & Pastor Ben Wilson who set out together to begin this mission. Only God could have known what a blessing this mission was going to become for so many people, both in Ghana and in the United States, also.

This month's article features a short interview with a special guest: Pastor Jimmy!

Question:

After meeting Pastor Ben for the very first time in 1993, when he came to Ohio for a hip surgery; what was the inspiration for you & Pastor Woody to create the Ghana Mission and to enter into a ministry partnership with Pastor Ben, in his home country of Ghana?

Pastor Jimmy's answer:

When we first met Pastor Ben, we had not dreamed of starting a mission in Ghana. We thought we were simply helping a young Pastor get a surgery that would enable him to work again. It was when his return to Ghana drew near that we and other leaders of the congregation began to wonder if it was possible to establish an ongoing relationship with him. He is an ordained Methodist Pastor, but he had been working as a teacher with Lutherans in Liberia until the civil war forced him and Julie to flee for their lives. We hoped that his Lutheran connections might open the door for him to become an official Lutheran missionary in Ghana and that we at First Lutheran Church could be a support congregation for him along with other congregations. As it turned out, the ELCA has no mission congregations in Ghana, and another expression of the Lutheran church works in Ghana. That's when we began to think about raising the money needed to support him on our own. We encouraged him to look for a place that could benefit from Christian mission work and some people in Ghana pointed him toward the very backward and marginalized village of Akrampa.

The people of First Lutheran Church raised the money to make it happen and they are still supporting this vital ministry today along with some new partners at Bethesda on the Bay Lutheran Church in Bay Village and Trinity Lutheran Church in Vermilion.

Question:

What is your favorite memory or story about Pastor Ben and/or his wife Julie? Also, please share with us a little bit about the impact of your long-standing friendship with Pastor Ben ...

Pastor Jimmy's answer:

Finding a favorite story is difficult. Pastor Ben & Julie have been long-term guests in my home several times. We cooked and cleaned house together and enjoyed a lot of laughter. One thing I will never forget is the extreme cold in January of 1994. Keep in mind that people in most parts of Ghana, except for a mountainous area, think that seventy degrees Fahrenheit is cold. If I remember correctly, we recorded the coldest temperature ever in Lorain that year. I believe it was minus twenty degrees Fahrenheit. Pastor Ben was in my guest bedroom with an electric blanket beneath him and another one over him and other blankets over that. It was only much later that I found out that bedroom is much colder than the rest of my house when the door is closed. He must have thought he was going to freeze to death. I know they would much prefer to visit here in the summer. We have developed a deep and lasting friendship for which I will always be grateful.

Question:

How has being a part of the Ghana Mission for more than 30 years helped you, or changed you, in your own personal walk of faith with Jesus Christ?

Pastor Jimmy's answer:

This adventure with the Ghana Mission has deepened my appreciation for the work of the Holy Spirit. We could never have dreamed this up on our own. If we had thought about it too much, we would surely have talked ourselves out of it. Pastor Ben, and the opportunities for mission work in the name of Jesus, were dropped into our laps. It was as if God was saying, "now do something with this." It has all come together like the pieces of a complex puzzle that we would never have been able to accomplish if it were not for the Holy Spirit working in, with and under to make it happen. And it is so very wonderful to see what has happened in Akrampa. It was a backward village that was ostracized, had no safe source of drinking water, worshiped an idol and where almost none of the children went to school. It now has multiple sources of drinking water, people of faith, a school that educates hundreds and a reputation that is attracting others to want to live near it. It is nothing short of amazing. Thanks be to God.

~Thank you, Pastor Jimmy, for sharing your thoughts with us!

Our newest ministry partner, Trinity Lutheran has created a webpage to feature all of Pastor Ben's current and previous articles. We sincerely thank both of our ministry partners, **Bethesda on the Bay**, and **Trinity**, for each posting all of Pastor Ben's articles on their respective websites - to make them accessible to everyone.

Please check out Trinity's new Ghana webpage at this exact website:

www.trinityvermillion.org/ghanamission

If Pastor Jimmy's interview made you curious to learn more about the Ghana Mission, we'd encourage you to go online and read any/all of Pastor Ben's articles, especially in chronological order, as he has spent many years writing the entire story of our mission for you, in his articles.

Pastor Ben will return for next month's article with more stories from Akrampa about our school and our students. Also, soon he'll be sharing some new photos of our students. We look forward to seeing their sweet little faces.

Please check back next month for Pastor Ben's October article.

With many thanks to all who pray for and support our Ghana Mission:
Kristen Anthony - Ghana Committee Chair